Calling attention to a matter of urgent public Importance

Situation arising out due to
re: Take over of the Contract Carriages in the State

SRI B. SATYANARAYANA SINGH —Hospet I call the attention of the Minister for Transport and Tourism to the situation that has arisen due to the take over of Contract Carriages in the State.

SRI M. MOHAMED ALI.—(Minister for Transport) I beg to state as follows.

As per the Karnataka Contract Carriages (Acquisition) Ordinance 1976, every contract carriage owned or operated by a contract carrige operator vests in the State Government free from all encumbrances with effect from the notifed date. Pursuant to the Ordinance, Government have issued four Notifications vesting in all about 800 contract carriages with the State Government. In terms of the said Notifications, the Administrators have taken possession of 537 vehicles till now. Government have also issued orders transferring such vehilces which are vested with the Government to the KSRTC.

The Administrators who took over the vehilces and transferred the same to the Corporation have arranged for preparation of the inventories of the vehicles giving details of the vehicles numbers make or model, chassis number, engine numbers, etc. In the meantime the Government have also issued directions to the KSRTC to expedite the question of preparing inventories and it is reported by the Corporation that as and when the vehicles were taken-over by them, a complete inventory of vehicles is being taken after being verifed by their Mechancial and Security Wings. The Corporation has also been directed to prepare a complete list of inventories. The High Court of Karnataka has given time for two weeks from 11th February, 1976 to complete formalities of preparing inventories. During this time, it is hoped that all the formalities of law in this regard will be complied with.

With regard to the absorption of employees, as per Section 20(3) of the Ordinance such of the employees who are workmen with the meaning of the Industrial Disputes Act and who have been, immediately before the commencement of the Ordinance, exclusively employed in connection with the acquired property shall on and from the notified date, become employees of the Corporation. Such absorption is regulated as per the scale prescribed in that section. As an interim arrangement, the KSRTC has provided employment to the employees of the Ex-Operators on daily wages basis pending finalisation of the Scheme of Absorption. The Government is contemplating to appoint

a Committee for the absorption of the employees of the ex-operators and in the meanwhile Home Department has been required to Relaxe age restriction and educational qualification for appointments as required under the service Regulations of the Corporation as was done for the absorption of the employees of the Ex-operators when the scheme of nationalisation was finalised for Shimoga and Kolar Districts.

Nationalisation of passenger road transport services is the accepted policy of the State Government. The Government war convinced. that the development of a vital sector like passenges transportation on sound lines having regard to public interest cannot be done under the leadershisp of the private sector working menely for profits and expandin only in sectors where profits are available. The Government have also observed that there is wasteful competition in running passenger transport services in certain sectors, whether it be competition amongst private operators or cometition between the private operators and Government Transport systems. Competition in all these cases has resulted in overall wastage of resources from the point of national ecsonomy. Operation of the contract carriages had led to a lot of abuse. Many of the contract carriages had been funetioning like stage carriages resulting in unhealthy competition. The Government also recognised that the existing legislations, Central as well as State, are inadequate to speed up the pace of nationalisation. Further, the Committee on Public Undertaking in its fith Report has recommended that the scheme of nationalisation of contract carriages be implemented as early as poesible taking into consideration the shortcomings and draw-backs of the system of contract carriages operated by the private operators which is detrimental in several ways.

The contract carriage vehicles acquired by the Government and transferred to the Corporation will be deployed for operation of services on nationalised routes and also on other routes where they were being operated, takening into consideration the services already operated by the Corporation. Immediately after the promulgation of the ordinance, the KSRTC took steps to operate additional services on all such routes where the contract carriage services were being operated by deploying its own fleet as also some of the vehicles, which had been transferred to the Corporation. With the vesting of additional vehicles and transfer of the same to the Corporation, these vehicles will be utlised to operate additional services on the routes operated by the Corporation as well as by ex-operators and also on such of the routes where they were plying in competition with the KSRTC. Further, these vehicles will also be used for meeting and

demand for casual contracts from private parties include providing visits to various tourist centres, places of pilgrimage excursion trips etc.

To achieve the objectives of providing an efficient, adequate and well coordinated system of passenger road transport services in the State as also to eliminate wasteful and unhealthy competition, the Government decided to nationalise the contract carriage services.

SRI B. SATYANARAYANA SINGH.—Is it not desirable that the private contract carriages which have been nationalised should be continued to ply on the same routes because the traffic potential has already been created and if they are not operated on the same routes the travelling public would be put to inconvenience ? This difficulty has been experienced in my district-Bellary. In the interest of general public would it not be desirable to operate the same routes ?

SRI M MOHAMED ALI.—It is desirable to put these contract carriages on the same routes on which the private operators were operating and as a result of operation, they have generated heavy traffic potential. I have made this suggestion to the Corporation authorities to see that to the extent possible the buses which have been taken over are put on the same routes.

SRI T.R. SHAMANNA.—Are you aware of the fact that there were certain concerns purely meant (like SRMS and Asian Travels) who used to run their buses only for conducting pilgrims trips and local tourists, can you not make any exemption for such genuine tourist contract buses ? Further more are you aware of the fact that much inconvenience has been caused to the public and what steps are taken to prevent the inconvenience caused to the travelling public ? Lastly, there is a loud complaint that many of the drivers and conductors and cleaners have not yet been taken into service, May I know what steps are going to be taken to absorb these employees ?

SRI M. MOHAMED ALI.—Government is aware of the fact that as a result of take over, few genuine operators have suffered. But the difficulty is that there is no separate definition for tourist carriage and contract carriage. All vehicles that have been registered as contract carriages and stage carriages, there is a legal difficulty. The matter has been referred to the Government of India long back to redefine the tourist and contract carriages. However nothing has been done so far. If they separately define the tourist carriages, then the question will be considered by the Government.

Under the Ordinance both the Stage and Special Permit Carriages have been nationalised. The day on which these carriages were taken over, they have taken special permits for one trip. Such vehicles have also been taken over by the Administrator. I have asked the Home Department to examine the whole question.

SRI T.R. SHAMANNA.—I want to know what steps are taken to prevent the hardship caused to the travellers by sudden stoppage of tourist buses? Furthermore, the question of absorbing the drivers, conductors and cleaners of the take-over carriages, they are not getting any jobs: discrimination in seizing the vehicles and the question of payment to those people who have borrowed money and taken these vehicles.

SRI M. MOHAMED ALI.—When we have taken over 800 vehicles, there is bound to create certain amount of dislocation. Now I think the whole thing has been restored back. If any specific instance of difficulty is brought to the notice of the Government, I will certainly direct the KSRTC to take immediate action to rectify it. Regarding the rehabilitation of the employees of the erstwhile operators, I have just now made a statement that they have been given jobs on daily wages basis. I have just made a statement in which it is said that the Government is contemplating to relax the age, qualification and other restrictions. Unless that is done it will not be possible to absorb the employees of the private operators. In the meantime they have been given some work on daily wages. I assure that all genuine employees will be provided with employment.

2.01 P.M.

SRI B. SATYANARAYANA SINGH.—Government is contemplating to appoint a Committee for that purpose. Have you taken any steps to appoint such committee and hasten through the absorption of the employees?

SRI M. MOHAMED ALI.—I would like to appoint that Committee soon and announce it within 2-3 days.

(ii) Respread of Stein bleedin gdisease in cocoanut gardens in Hassan District.

SRI K.H. HANUME GOWDA (Hassan).—I call the attention of Minister of State for Fisheries and Horticulture regarding the disease caused to Cocoanut gardens in Hassan District.

SRI K. T. RATHOD (Minister of State for Fisheries and Horticulture) —I beg to make the following Statement: